



Live HV Cable Opened in Error

On Thursday 8th December 2016, during the course of an LV UG modernisation project, a contract jointing team inadvertently stripped and removed the lead from a **Live** steel tape armoured HV cable and subsequently applied test equipment, resulting in a flashover.

The jointer received burns to his hands and neck and was taken to a local burns unit for treatment.

Although the initial injuries were not considered life threatening, this incident could have been a fatality.

Fortunately, the contract jointer was discharged from hospital the following day, Friday 9th December.

A local Panel of Inquiry has been established to investigate this incident



Picture 1: HV cable in trench



Picture 2: the HV cable following application of test equipment

Recommendations and action points

The findings of the Panel will be communicated in due course, however the following stand as pertinent reminders of existing procedures:

- When identifying LV cables, it is **essential** that you comply with the process defined in [PSSI 12 Appendix 1](#) - especially, where reasonably practicable, exposing all cables at the point of work
- Make allowance for errors or inaccuracies in operational records. Where there is doubt, use all available alternative sources to build confidence in the cable identification – e.g. detection instruments, archive records, requesting the isolation and identification of HV cables etc.
- Cease work and contact an SAP if a cable, thought to be LV, has only three cores or there is reason to suspect it may be HV e.g. it has a copper screen or metallised paper under the sheath
- If an HV cable is opened in error – this should be reported to the HV Control Person immediately.
- If an HV cable is opened, all unidentified HV cables present in the joint hole should be isolated where reasonably practicable until the identity of the opened cable is confirmed. If not reasonably practicable consider other precautions such as an additional excavation and tracing back towards opened cable.
- Ensure any known tape armoured HV cables are recorded on UMV.
- When new apparatus is installed it must be installed to specification and it is **essential** that data management records are updated with any fault or investment work that has been carried out.

For further information and guidance covering the identification of LV cables, please refer to [PSSI 12 Appendix 1](#) and [OPSAF-12-011 \(LWM 4.1\) Issue 6](#)